

What Do I Love?

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

Alhambra Obsession Cracked

Could the search for the perfect "Alhambra" be .

Have I been released? (Passive voice).

Am I free of my Alhambra obsession? (Active voice).

That would be too good to be true. Which means I really wish it were.

Is that why I woke up feeling strangely renewed but not?

Through my forced Corona retirement, and time to think, practice, perfect, write, and market away, have I actually broken my chains? I hope so.

But only time will tell since I can't trust or believe today's "feelings."

On the one hand, maybe I'm just tired.

On the other hand, maybe something really has changed. A shift, a fall down the apple tree, even a transformation.

Maybe I'll be playing guitar now for different reasons and at a different pace.

Thursday, November 12, 2020

Political Writing

Maybe I can deal with my political frustrations by writing fiction. Maybe this is "my way." I write off-beat fiction, allegories, metaphors, all indirect and biting.

Perhaps this is my indirect, subtle, but forceful way of dealing with frustration and anger and distilling it through fiction.

I could be and become a "political writer" like Jonathan Swift.

Seems my choice is either to retreat to my violin room (teenage method) or deal with it "directly," in my usual, comfortable, indirect manner, by writing these off-beat stories.

This idea is so preposterous, it could be right.

It certainly would help me deal with the frustrations, sorrows, and victories in and of the political world.

It might even give me a reason and motivation to publish my stuff! Make my political contribution by making my voice heard.

Friday, November 13, 2020

Slow and Ostracized

All so that I will not be (slow) stupid, and thus ostracized from the human community.

But now, since slowness, through courage and bravery, is okay, I will no longer be ostracized.

How this happened, I'm not sure. But it's been a long brain-cleaning process.

Could one source of my motivation to constantly improve be based on the fear of being ostracized from mankind?

Probably.

One of the rewards for self-improvement is the approval, admiration, and applause of others who view it as worthy and worthwhile. Thus you rise in esteem in their eyes, and with rising esteem comes rising acceptance and love. You are welcomed back into the womb.

However, if you are slow and stupid, you are ostracized, kicked out, alone, on your own. Not a happy thing. In fact, terrifying and life threatening.

I suppose such a threat never really goes away but rather rises and falls with the tides of daily life.

It is just one of the quotidian pleasures. and terrors.

Let's face it: If I play guitar slowly I will be ostracized. Fantasy or reality, true or

not, that is my long-term fear. And of course, no matter how fast I play, the fear never goes away, because speed itself has nothing to do with it. So running away by practicing and playing as fast as I can never works because the faster I run away, the faster I keep running into myself.

No one else really cares about my running or guitar speed but me. But knowing that doesn't make it any better.

What to do?

I don't know. Seems awareness of this crazy disease is all I can do. Awareness doesn't make it go away, but it does add some humor to the situation.

Running

Sam loved to run.

He loved to run mostly to run away from himself.

However, no matter how fast he ran, he'd always run into himself. This was a real problem.

He went to see the running therapist Dr. Slough Downquick. In order to slow her own therapeutic pace, she was sitting in a bed of quicksand.

"Welcome to my office," she said, her fangs loosely lapping the pools of milk around her. "It is a pleasure to meet a happy runner."

"Happy? I'm not happy. In fact, I'm terrified. No matter how hard I try, I keep blocking myself."

Dr. Leslie sipped an iced tear. "Running into yourself again, eh?" she said, pouring the rest of its contents on her naked (bare) feet. "But, no problem. I know what to do. It all comes down to self-awareness. And what is knowledge but no ledge, which means stepping to the edge or ledge of the cliff and jumping off? Flying through the air as you fall off and into the abyss will free you from your illusory fears by replacing them with real ones."

"I don't know," said Sam, as he too sank into the quicksand. "I don't need new fears."

"Oh, yes you do! You're suffering from cowardice and lassitude. That's why you're still living in quicksand. Quick sand is speedy and fast, but you sink. Courage and daring is what you need. They'll lift you out of the pit and even help you fly again."

". . .Fly again?"

"Yes. It's time for you to replace knowledge with no ledge."

"Okay, Doctor. Perhaps you're right. I know I'm not standing in quicksand for nothing. Maybe I'll give it a try."

He handed the doctor her 600 ruble fee, climbed out of her quicksand, and walking out door. To his surprise, her office stood on a ledge, and he immediately fell off. Down, down, into the abyss he fell, but just as he was about to hit bottom, a reverse air current caused by the wind-making Bellows of Depression located in his Abyssmal Basement, blew against his bottom, pushing him up. Soon he found himself far from the doctor's office, flying through space high above the abyss. He eventually landed on a mountain top. There he sat for a few years, watching the sky as the sun warmed his head.

Friday, November 13, 2020

Returning to Guitar as Myself

My guitar playing videos: record the whole practice session.

Even put it on Youtube to study it, delete it, put it on again, study it, delete it again, learn from it, etc.

It's not for my audience. It's just for me.

But if they want to listen in, it's fine.

Saturday, November 14, 2020

"I feel alone and purposeless. Tom complained as he began sawing off his leg.

"There you go again," his mother shot back. "Complain, complain, It's only because you have a good imagination, and you imagine all these separation ills. Truth is, none of it is true. You're not alone and purposeless. You think you are because because of the way this world is constructed. But such separation is impossible, The grand truth is that all is one, everything is connected, and this forever and always. So shut up and get back to work."

Tom pulled back a bit. "You're pretty forceful, Ma," he said. "Are you making this up?"

"I'm making it up as much as you are. We are all creatures of our imagination. However, I choose to imagine that everything in this world is connected, forever and always, And this truth is not subject to our whims and fantasies. Oh yes, we can imagine whatever we want. But that doesn't make it true."

At that point, Tom descended from his black cloud, took his rightful place in their rowboat, and began paddling across Lake Michigan.

Why do I keep creating, imagining, this illusion of separation?

Is there a hidden benefit to me?

I don't see any.

Is it a secret motivational form?

I doubt it.

Is it "merely" a long-term habit, a thinking I've grown up with, a way of turning the world in my hand? I don't know.

In fact, I can see no benefit or help to me from this kind of divisive thinking.

So why do it?

It's all entertainment and play forms, some dangerous, others childish and more playful. But whatever form the entertainment and play takes, we are still always and

forever are connected.

Why waste your time and energy on the illusion of division when the reality is that everyone is connected and all is one.

Giving Up Giving Up

I had given up.

Why? Fog of age? Birthday? Done it all, out of gas. Other? All the above?

I still don't really know.

When? Again, I don't really know.

But when and why really don't matter.

But giving up does.

On the other hand, maybe I've just been tired. After publishing two books, and more, perhaps I just needed a long break, a rest. And my "I've done it all" was my rationalization for giving myself a long break.

Today somehow today I recognize the gnawing remnants of this malady. And in recognizing its poison and dangers, I'm about to give it up.

Sunday, November 15, 2020

Why Not Choose Hope?

Every morning when I get up, and then continually throughout the day, I make the free choice between hope and hopelessness.

Hope is better than hopelessness. At least, I think so.

Then why would I consciously or unconsciously choose hopelessness? Yes, I might base it on my so-called "feelings," but truth is, why should I even "feel" that way? Why should I interpret a miserable feeling or a feeling of misery as hopeless?

Seems I could just as soon, as easily, interpret it as hopeful. Why not?

The attitude and even the feeling of hope or hopelessness is a choice, my choice.

What a mystery why I should bother choosing the latter!

Why? How stupid can I get?

Why not choose hope? As I wander through this illusory world, it's so much better.

Example: Yesterday after folk dancing, my left knee hurt.

I could say, this shows I'm going downhill, my folk dance career will soon be over, old age and decrepitude are on the horizon, why bother doing anything? It's all hopeless from here on out.

Or I could say, this pain is a directional signal, a warning, which luckily my body is giving me. It shows I need to start or increase my exercises, strengthen my muscles, reenter the upward path to health and greater leg strength. Also, I didn't warm up enough before the class, and my focus on my body was not strong enough during class. Tomorrow I'll begin my path upward by exercising my body in focused strength-training exercises. I know what to do. I just need to.

As I say, the choice is between down and up, cold and warmth, darkness and light.

Why not choose up? So much more blue sky and sun.

Poly Ticks Never End

"Hey, Tommy, why the hopeless grin this morning?" Martha looked weird.

"Easy," Tommy answered, grinning from cheek to cheek. "Hopelessness is fun."

"Fun?" Martha practically fell down the stairs in shock. "Are you crazy?"

What's fun about hopelessness?"

Tommy brushed his tooth, placed his sad toothbrush on the bathroom mantle piece, and said, "It gives me a wild tickle. When I feel hopeless, my body shines. And I feel little bubbles of amazement hurtling through and bursting in my brain. They massage each cell and fill me with a sense of awe and wonder."

"You are crazy," Martha concluded. And because you are thus, I'm never

speaking to you again. My mother forbids it.”

“But your mother has been dead for forty-six years.”

“How dare you say that! How can you insult my beloved in such a way?”

“It’s outrageous. I’m never speaking to you again.” Martha stomped out of the house, and down the outdoor steps, headed for her car, jumped in, then jumped out, threw a hand grenade at Tom’s door, then drove off as his home exploded in a plume of hopelessness.

She watched Tom shoot as he shot and flew high above the structure. Toothbrush still in hand, he brushed a passing cloud clean, rinsed with his spit, and sank back to earth, carrying a large bucket handed to him by Mr. Accumulus, the cloud’s father, had handed him.

“Use it well,” the Grand Pere had told him. “Use black to paint your way out of hopelessness and white, or gold, or yellow, to bring color to your light.”

After that, Tom settled into a new Hop Tower condominium in the United States capitol, ran for president, and, when he won, hired Martha to head the Washing-Ton laundry brigade.

November 17, 2020

The Fifth Pillar

Leading the Ugh-and-Wow Life

Are the Ten Commandments personal?

Does each individual have their own personal commandment, a specific mission given at birth, which must be accomplished while on earth?

I believe they are.

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Warming Up

Maybe I can do it without warm-up and survive. But it is not my way, not best,

not optimal.

Best for me is about 15 minutes of warm-up, physically for folk dancing, guitar, voice. It warms up my body by putting my muscles “in the mood,” and prepares my mind with higher focus. Higher focus creates more blood supply: blood flow causes all to flow more smoothly.

And flowing smoothly is what I want.

Comedy

To See Myself as a Comedian

To see myself as a comedian, a stand-up comic, with a stand up folk dance teaching show, a guitar show, a one-man Dmitri Zlatov show, a walking comedy routine, is a good thing.

Leaving my name out, or changing my name (to Dmitri Zlatov, or whatever) may also be a good thing.

This again would be a radical post-corona attitude change. It would relax and free me even more. Imagine a comedy tour program, the Human Comedy Bulgaria tour, the Laughing Koprivshtitsa Waltz, and whatever.

I just got scared: fear reflected in my sudden knee pain. I sense it has something to do with my comedy breakthrough. Certainly the approach would help my knees, and everything else. A great leap into freedom.

Truth is, by using gaida, folk singing, ad libs and more, I already have a comedy show. I just have to see it that way. An attitude change.

But of course, it has to be my brand of off-the-wall comedy. Subtle, intellectual flights of imagination that tickle my own mind. Others may listen and follow. But self-tickling has to be the center. And it is.

Start with fifteen minutes of funny warm up for every event.

Fifteen minutes of funny classic guitar, scale and arpeggio warm-up.

What is funny classic guitar? Great question.

Maybe just attitude: Playing it, warming up while thinking in a funny, comedy manner.

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Comic

I wonder if I have any talent as a comic. Wouldn't that be a fulfilling last-stage development.

A wonderful way of seeing and freeing myself.

Classic guitar practice is my great private love. But as a public performance, not my true talent. Maybe comedy is – my off-the-wall, zany style.

Why do I resist using the word comedy?

I like the word *humor* better. Humor is more subtle; comedy is brash, open, in your face. Humor sneaks into your house through the back door, while comedy bangs at the front door and barges in.

But maybe a bit of barging would be good for me.

First Benefit as a Comic

If I saw myself as a humorist, the greatest first freedom would be: It wouldn't matter how I played the classical guitar! Mistakes, poor tone, flubbed notes, none of it would matter! I wouldn't have to display such humiliations in public. And if I ever did, they would no longer even be humiliations.

I would also be able to make "jokes," that is, zany comments, sayings, mental wanderings to my hearts content.

And I could do it all in public!

In fact, as a humorist, the barriers between private and public might even fall. After all, my private mind is rather innocuous; it wouldn't insult or hurt people. The worst others might say is, "What? I have no idea what you're talking about!" And they might lose their focus, stop paying attention, and wander off. In other words, ostracism

through misunderstanding is about the worst it could get.

What about the big questions of fragility, aches and pains, fears, and death? Humorists are expected to die, and also deal with terrors, aches and pains, worries, more. Woes of life, are their bread and butter. But rather than sad, under the humorist wing, they become fun.

Friday, November 20, 2020

Fears Are My Friends

With a vaccine close on the horizon, and corona virus coming to a close, I see stability returning to the markets, and, for the first time, a stable future up ahead, not only with few financial fears, but even a sense of trading skill settling in my heart and mind.

I've been through this kind of stability illusion before. But now, the fact that I am aware of it and somewhat cautious of falling into the hubris trap again gives me a but more confidence.

In this new situation, my new fear is the fear of having no fear. What will motivate me?

I know that whether I have money or not, my mind must be occupied. If not, it will eat me up. That's the human condition. So for my own survival, with or without money, I must have something to do. Money is really besides the point.

All this I know.

But it has come up again.

Big deal. I also know the sun will rise every day, and still every day is a new day with new directions, problems, etc.

Okay, settled and onward. With my new fear of no fear, what will I do and why will I do it?

The why is easy: If I don't use my mind, occupy it with something, idleness will eat me up. I can replace the old fear of financial ruin, with a fear of idleness, the disease

of the rich and comfortable.

I am not rich. But I am comfortable.

And of course, if you have nothing to do, if you are idle, comfortable is not so comfortable.

Next question: How to fill the vacuum created by idleness? Follow my miracle schedule program.

Why?

“Just shut up and do it!” is the only legitimate answer.

Evidently, I need enemies. Good enemies are the best. And that’s what lethargy and inertia are.

Saturday, November 21, 2020

Guitar Discovery

Relaxation and Bending Focus

(A Radical Difference and Approach to Hands and Knees)

Focus on relaxing, bending, “leaning in,” of the distal phalanges, especially the ring finger (digitus annularis), which, during the rest stroke gives control while it releases power.

Added to playing very fast and very light it opens new paths of guitar playing growth.

Monday, November 23, 2020

Turbulence, a touch of chaos, and dissatisfaction upset me.

But they also energize me.

But this morning I am visited by a strange, new, feeling of stable satisfaction: everything in order and in place. Nice to learn something new, but also satisfied with the old.

Peace, contentment, and satisfaction with both Hebrew and my MIT player.

Stability and security.

Savor and enjoy it while it lasts.

Is this satisfaction a temporary blip? Probably.

But it certainly is different.

So pleasant to enjoy a passing cloud.

But don't get stuck under it.

Tuesday, November 24, 2020

Doing Something by Doing Nothing

The path to the prize is more valuable than the prize itself.

Witness the stock market. Now its shooting up. Suddenly, my money-making challenge is gone. Today making money in the market feels so "easy." I just wait and watch, and my stocks go up. Nothing to it, nothing to do or think.

Waiting and watching is very difficult for me to do. Patience is a big challenge. I like to do, do, do. But best today is to do nothing.

That is something new for me to do. A case where doing nothing is doing something.

Strangely, I feel nostalgic for the challenges of the corona period. But it is coming to a close. A few more months and we're just about done. End of an era. The world will soon be opening up and running again. And I'll have to reinvent it.

I need some new goals.

My long "vacation" period is ending.

Should I stay a semi-retired hermit?

Do I want a life of perpetual "vacation" with no worries?

I'm getting nauseous just thinking about it.

Thursday, November 26, 2020

The Power of Love

What do I love about classical guitar?

The touch and feel of the strings.

The wholesome, rich, beautiful, relaxing sound soothing my ears and relaxing my body.

Legato: The feel of the strings under each finger.

I slow down as I play. To find the feeling, know the feeling, and focus on it.

What do I love about languages?

Feel, touch, sensation.

The feel of syllables clicking in my mouth. The wild bounce and tingle of the exotic ringing through my jaw and ear bones.

The taste. The sound and tingle of each word resonating in my mouth and brain.

The sight, visual thrill, of each mysterious Hebrew, Arabic, Slavic, and even Latin letter.

Imagining the wild ride of meaning and thrill of competence when I master a word, phrase, complete sentence.

The fun of talking to someone in this foreign language.

What do I love about singing?

The sensual sound of my voice massaging in my throat, vibrating my neck and body.

What do I love about writing?

Liberty flowing. The wild ride of my imagination running free, anywhere, everywhere, no restraints. Loving my imagination and where it takes me.

What do I love about about folk dancing?

Similar to classical guitar. Music, sounds, pleasant giggle of the body, social life (people aspect!): Now that is different!

I can play with others. Fun together.

What do I love about running?

What do I love about yoga? (and gym?)

What do I love about tours?

Social life, people aspect? Adventure. (I can play with others. Have fun together. Could this be part of it? Wouldn't that be great, if true. Social director me. Why do I have it? I like playing with others.

Where did I first learn that I like playing with people? Conducting the orchestra at Music and Art? Organizing and leading the chorus at Chaits? Organizing and leading the napkin- folding contests at Chaits? Social directing at Chaits. Before that I know I loved playing "reinforcement" along at the Ewen Park water fountain at around ages 5-7, or running dreamily under the sun through the verdant and golden fields in the country at the farm, also before 12. Falling in love with women? But that came later, teenage years.

What do I love about stock trading?

What do I love, if anything, about politics? (Or perhaps better, what use to me is politics? Could I call it a distracting hobby?)

Politics engross and hold me. They "relax" me by diverting my attention. Entertainment value? Politics feeds my anger and resentment. (Can that be called "love?")

What do I love about leading?

It started when I lead the "Boys Against the Girls" in 2nd grade at Barnard School for Girls. I liked it because I did things my own way, but I did them my own way with others. It was fun first doing things my own way, and second, doing them with others (also my own way, but modulated to fit the group. So the challenge and fun were how to modulate or manipulate others. That is to "fit them" into my vision. Fitting them in is manipulation. Consulting with them (however subtle, I did it) is modulation. I like consulting. Modulation is the word. Mine is a subtle form of consultation. How so? I

look around the room into everyone's eyes to see if they agree. This is my form of consultation. Clever, inclusive, and funny. I love it when it works. And it usually does.

Monday, November 30, 2020

Conferring Wisdom

Along with a few diseases, age, especially old age, adds a microscope to your telescope.

By slowing you down, it creates microscopic vision – the ability to perceive things deeply.

This new vision ability confers wisdom.

Outdoor Parking Lot Folk Dancing

Should I write a folk dance column about how to teach outdoor folk dancing in a parking lot?

What about the fee – or rather, donation? Should it be \$5.00 or \$10.00?

How to decide?

One way is thinking what is best for the customers.

Free folk dancing would not be good for customer psychology. They might feel guilty about getting classes from a professional for nothing. (And any way, they don't, they should.)

A small fee assuages their guilt and confers a greater sense of worth on their dancing. (At least it should.)

It's also nice to get paid something for my work. The question is still How much? No question the next step above \$10.00 would be \$15.00 (or even \$20.00). But both are too high.

\$5 is low but acceptable. \$10.00 is good and reasonable.

What about greed? Or the happiness I get from earning lots of money? Again, I

don't need it, but it would be nice.

Would a price raise be good for my customers? Would it make them happy, make them feel they are not taking advantage of me, that it's fair for me I earn a living.

We had forty people yesterday. I made good money even with the \$5.00 price. It was record attendance, and thus very usual. Most times we get 10-15 people. At \$5.00, I make very little. So on that level, wanting a fair wage, asking for a donation of \$10 per person would be reasonable and right.

What about the idea that at \$5 per person I'm doing mitzvah work, just about working for free, for nothing, and following the Covid born. post-shut-down idea that I love teaching folk dancing so much I'll even do it for nothing! This is, after all, what gave birth to the outdoor parking lot idea.

Will I lose that sense and of love, if I ask for the \$10.00 donation instead of \$5.00? I don't want to lose, or forget about my love, about how important folk dance leading/teaching is to me.

In other words, if I raise the donation price, will I be focusing on money again, and forgetting about love? Will I push it into the background where is used to be, with fear of penury dominating my mind? I don't want to go there again.

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

The Post-Eighty Excuse

One of my present blocks, fears, and excuses is age. A part of my brain keeps saying, "I'm eighty-three now. I can't do or start that. I'm too old. I have no future, etc."

I know its just another excuse, a form of hesitance, resistance, worry, and reason for not diving into the next life adventure which always takes place in the here-and-now. And at any age, here-and-now is all we've got.

In the past, I created other excuses. Now that I've crossed the eighty line, I've created a new one.

The only legitimate question is: How can I release myself from its noxious grip?
Self-awareness is my first step.

Hidden behind my humor are my soulful folk dance and folk song cries.

Well, maybe "hidden" is the wrong word. But just as NLJ is part of my serious/sad/soulful personality, and my fiction is the off-the-wall humor, so in singing are my funny ad libs and the soulful, mournful wails of "Mule Skinners Blues," "Dark as a Dungeon," and the wild yelps of yodeling "Long Island Yodel," "Mountain Yodel," and more.

Thursday, December 3, 2020

Secret Bandit Life

Surprise, Wonder, and Humor in the Indirect Life

I wonder if I take a secret pride, even love, in not selling my books, in not admitting, telling others I choreographed these dances, in not telling folks I created things, and anything, That I like the idea of a stealth creator, that I did it behind their backs, that I sneaked it in, fooled them, made them laugh, and that behind the scenes I am creating everything and secretly running the show.

Is there a secret, mysterious. and satisfying power living in the world this way?
Mischievous, a smiling, secret brat, fooling the big brass?

Maybe I love not saying who I am or what I do, living my public life in disguise.
Could be.

This may explain why I feel so uncomfortable selling or promoting my books, and choreographies. It goes against my secret, mischievous nature, and my love of the subtle, rebellious, revolutionary, illegal, bandit life.

Look at how I secretly relish our "illegal bandit" outdoor parking lot folk dance group. I love breaking the rules, but subtly, quietly, diplomatically.

Saturday, December 12, 2020

The Practice of Being There

Secrets of Motivation

I've been everywhere I need to be. There's no place left where I need to go.

What do I do now?

Practice guitar not to improve, but to seize the moment. Be in the present.

"Improvement," "self-improvement" use the motivation of the future, future reward. "Some day I'll be better. If I work hard enough, practice enough, some day I'll get it right."

Present practice, or being there practice, uses the now as "motivation." It pushes you to stay put, stay here, grab the here-and-now, seize the moment.

And the moment is a grand reality.

Motivation is always good.

Should I use "self-improvement" or "being there" as motivation? Maybe both.

Interesting: When I think of "self-improvement," I think of others watching, judging, and hopefully, approving of me, appreciating and admiring what I do.

When I think of "seizing the moment," of "being there," judgement, approval, and admiration of others is strangely absent.

Truth his, for highest focus, "seize the moment," "being there," living in the present, is best. If you do this, improvement will take care of itself, self-improvement will happen, will take care of itself.

Thus living in the here-and-now is the best way to go.

Thus ends a New Leaf.